

From: rayeward@yahoo.com
Sent: Friday, June 09, 2006 7:27 PM
To: NOP Livestock
Subject: Your upcoming decision re: organic and milk cows

Attachments: ATTACHMENT.TXT

Mr. Bradley:

I understand the USDA is considering a change in its criteria regarding how dairy cattle are raised and managed to produce certified organic milk.

I would urge you not to change the existing demand that the cows be raised and maintained on pasture, or at least have regular, sustained pasture access.

Doing otherwise; that is, lessening the restrictions would be a bad decision from the business, consumer and animal welfare perspectives.

First and foremost, the term "organic" needs to be held to high standards. Consumers are willing to pay more for organic milk, produce and meat because they want unadulterated sources of food. History has shown that livestock that is farmed in factories must be given large amounts of antibiotics to live in such unnatural circumstances. This is not organic.

Farmers who are allowed to raise animals in factories will lessen the value of the organic "brand" and lessen its value to the consumer. They may lower their costs but they will ultimately also reduce their margins and profit.

From a consumer perspective, the Consumers do not want to have to read fine print; they want to be able to TRUST that food is what the label implies. The jury is still out regarding the longterm health effect of food additives. Do not contribute to the last refuge for those of us who want to be able to trust what we eat.

Regarding, animal welfare -- the argument is obvious. The cruelty inflicted on farm animals in the name of profit is well chronicled.

Thank you considering this input.

Sincerely,

Raye E. Ward
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